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EXAMINER	
SYKES, ALTREV C	
ART UNIT	**PAPER NUMBER**
1794	

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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/575,144	LORENTZ ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	ALTREV C. SYKES	1794	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE *3* MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1)☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on _____.

2a)☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b)☒ This action is non-final.

3)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4)☒ Claim(s) *28-54* is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6)☒ Claim(s) *28-54* is/are rejected.

7)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9)☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10)☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a)☐ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11)☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12)☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a)☒ All b)☐ Some * c)☐ None of:

1.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

3.☒ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ .
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

1. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claim 49 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Regarding claim 49, the phrase "dry matter" renders the claim indefinite because it is unclear how the limitation is related to the claimed coating which comprises a film and a hydrophilic and/or permeabilizing agent. The hydrophilic and/or permeabilizing agent is then claimed as being in mineral layer or polymer form. (See Claims 39 and 40) Further, the coating is also claimed as being formed from a film-forming polymer in a liquid vector. (See Claim 51) As such, examiner unclear as to what part of the coating composition is considered dry matter. Additionally, the instant specification does not provide any further insight for dry matter.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

3. Claim 28, 30, 32-35, 40, 41, 44, 50, 54 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Roe et al. (US 5,607,760)

Examiner notes the broad language of claim 28 and finds that the prior art meets the limitations in two ways.

Roe et al. discloses a disposable absorbent article which comprises a liquid pervious, hydrophilic topsheet joined to said backsheet, said topsheet having an inner surface oriented toward the interior of said diaper and an outer surface oriented toward the skin of the wearer when said diaper is being worn, wherein at least a portion of said topsheet outer surface comprises an effective amount of a lotion coating. (See Col 3, lines 13-20) A suitable topsheet may be manufactured from a wide range of materials such as woven and nonwoven materials (e.g., a nonwoven web of fibers). (See Col 5, lines 24-27) As such, examiner equates the topsheet to the fibrous support as claimed by applicant. Roe et al. discloses similarly it is important that the lotion composition may comprise an additional hydrophilic surfactant (or a mixture of hydrophilic surfactants). (See Col 11, lines 43-45 and 50-52) Roe et al. discloses the melted lotion composition forms a solidified coating or film on the surface of the topsheet. (See Col 24, lines 43-45) As such, examiner equates the lotion coating comprising the hydrophilic surfactant agent to the hydrophilic coating as claimed by applicant.

In the alternative, regarding claims 28, 44 and 50, 54, Roe et al. discloses a disposable diaper having a liquid pervious, hydrophilic topsheet joined to a backsheet, wherein at least a portion of said topsheet outer surface comprises a lotion coating. (See Col 2, lines 46-49 and Col 3, lines 14-20) Roe et al. also discloses an absorbent core position between said topsheet and said backsheet. (See Col 3, lines 30-31) Roe et al. discloses the absorbent core may include comminuted wood pulp (airfelt) and cellulose wadding. (See Col 4, lines 56-65) As such, examiner equates the absorbent core as disclosed by Roe et al. to the fibrous support as claimed by applicant. Roe et al. discloses a suitable topsheet may be polymeric materials such as a film. (See Col 5, lines 24-30) Roe et al. discloses if the topsheet can be rendered hydrophilic by treating it with a surfactant. (See Col 7, lines 53-63) Examiner equates the surfactant to a hydrophilic agent and equates the topsheet film to the hydrophilic coating as claimed by applicant. Regarding the limitation of a film covering at least a part of the support, examiner notes that the topsheet would meet the limitation since it may be a film which is joined to the absorbent core.

Examiner notes that a compatibilizer and wetting agent are recited as optional and therefore is not required by the prior art. However, examiner notes that Roe et al. anticipates the use of a wetting agent as claimed by applicant since a mixture of surfactants is disclosed. (See Col 11, lines 43-45 and 50-52)

Regarding claim 30, Roe et al. discloses suitable methods for treating the topsheet with a surfactant include spraying the topsheet material with the surfactant and immersing the

material into the surfactant. (See Col 7, lines 53-63) Therefore, the hydrophilic agent is a layer of material covering at least part of the topsheet film.

Regarding claims 32, 33, 34, 35 Roe et al. discloses the absorbent core may include any of a wide variety of liquid-absorbent materials commonly used in absorbent articles, such as comminuted wood pulp, which is generally referred to as airfelt. Examples of other suitable absorbent materials for use in the absorbent core include creped cellulose wadding; chemically stiffened, modified or cross-linked cellulosic fibers; synthetic fibers such as crimped polyester fibers; tissue including tissue wraps and tissue laminates; absorbent foams; or any equivalent material or combinations of materials, or mixtures of these. (See Col 4, lines 57-67 and Col 5, lines 1-2)

Regarding claims 40 and 41, as set forth above, examiner equates the hydrophilic agent as claimed by applicant to the surfactant as disclosed by Roe et al. prior art. Roe et al. discloses it is highly desirable that the diaper topsheet is made of a hydrophilic material to promote rapid transfer of liquids (e.g., urine) through the topsheet. Similarly, it is important that the lotion composition also be sufficiently wettable to ensure that liquids will transfer through the topsheet more rapidly. (See Col 11, lines 43-45) Roe et al. further discloses the hydrophilic surfactant may be a silicone copolymer such as General Electric SF 1228 which is a silicone polyether copolymer. (See Col 23, lines 3-7) While Roe et al. is not explicit as to a specific surfactant for the top sheet, examiner has reason to believe that those disclosed for the lotion composition would also be favorable for the

topsheet since Roe et al. discloses at least a portion of said topsheet outer surface comprises an effective amount of a lotion coating. (See Col 3, lines 14-20) Examiner also notes that the lotion composition comprises an emollient of polysiloxane compounds in which the monomeric siloxane units may also comprise alky radicals such as methyl. (See Col 16, lines 59-60) Roe et al. also discloses that preferred polysiloxanes include substitution with phenyl-functional or alky groups with ether, or polyether. (See Col 17, lines 22-34)

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

> (a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham* **v.** *John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

6. Claims 29, 31, 36- 39, 45-49 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Roe et al. (US 5,607,760)

Regarding claim 29, examiner maintains the position as set forth above. It would have been well within the ordinary skill of one in the art at the time of the invention to include the surfactant in the polymeric materials used to manufacture the topsheet film instead of as a layer on top of the film motivated by the desire to provide a hydrophilic property to topsheet.

Regarding claim 31, Roe et al. discloses the topsheet may be joined to the absorbent core in any manner well known in the art. (See Col 6, lines 1-4, 8-10 and 26-30) Roe et al. further discloses the topsheet and absorbent core may be secured together by a uniform continuous layer of adhesive as an attachment means. (See Col 6, lines 8-11) As such, one of ordinary skill in the art would have expected for the uniform continuous layer of adhesive to be durable since its intended function is to provide secured layers in absorbent articles such as feminine hygiene garments, diapers, incontinence briefs, diaper holders, training pants, and the like. (See Col 4, lines 25-30) It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to choose a durable bond as claimed by applicant motivated by the desire to provide an article wherein the support and film stay intact even during use. Further motivation for modifying the bonding would stem from the product's end use environment.

Regarding claim 36, Roe et al. discloses the configuration and construction of the absorbent core may also be varied to comprise one or more layers of structures to

accommodate different uses such as diapers, incontinence pads, pantiliners, regular sanitary napkins, and overnight sanitary napkins, and to accommodate wearers ranging from infants to adults. (See Col 5, lines 3-17) Roe et al. discloses the absorbent core can include a secondary topsheet for increasing the wearer's comfort. (See Col 5, lines 17-20) Roe et al. discloses a topsheet may be nonwoven webs of synthetic fibers such as polyester, and polypropylene. (See Col 5, lines 24-35) Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the absorbent core as taught by Roe et al. to have a nonwoven surface since Roe et al. teaches doing so is favorable for increasing the wearer's comfort.

Regarding claim 37, Roe et al. discloses a fibrous support joined to a liquid pervious hydrophilic topsheet as set forth above for claim 28. Therefore, the product as taught by Roe et al. would be permeable to water. While Roe et al. is not explicit that the product has a surface tension which is not lowered by more than 50% when in contact with the aqueous solution, examiner has reason to believe that said property would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to optimize motivated by the desire to control the rate at which liquid will be drawn through the topsheet and absorbed by the absorbent core since a high surface tension would limit the amount of liquid allowed to flow through the topsheet surface. Roe et al. discloses that the topsheet is preferably made of a hydrophilic material to promote rapid transfer of liquids through the topsheet. (See Col 7, lines 51-53) Roe et al. discloses the configuration and construction of the absorbent core may also be varied to comprise one or more layers of structures to accommodate different

uses such as diapers, incontinence pads, pantiliners, regular sanitary napkins, and overnight sanitary napkins, and to accommodate wearers ranging from infants to adults. (See Col 5, lines 3-17) Therefore, one of ordinary skill in the art would have been further motivated to modify the surface tension by end use.

Regarding claims 45-47, Roe et al. discloses a suitable topsheet may be manufactured from a wide range of materials including polymeric materials as apertured formed thermoplastic films, apertured plastic films, and hydroformed thermoplastic films; and reticulated thermoplastic films. (See Col 5, lines 24-30) As the topsheet disclosed by Roe et al. is designed to allow fluid to flow rapidly through the layer, one of ordinary skill in the art would expect for the topsheet film to be formed from a water-insoluble polymer. One of ordinary skill in the art would have been easily motivated to use a water-insoluble polymer for the film layer in order to prevent deterioration of the topsheet during end use which would decrease the wearer's comfort. Examiner notes that the recitation of "a water-insoluble polymer obtained by polymerization of monomers chosen from" is a process limitation. Further, applicant is reminded that even though product-by-process claims are limited by and defined by the process, determination of patentability is based on the product itself. The patentability of a product does not depend on its method of production. If the product in the product-by-process claim is obvious from a product of the prior art, the claim is unpatentable even though the prior product was made by a different process. *In re Thorpe*, 227 USPQ 964, 966 (Fed. Cir. 1985). The burden has been shifted to the applicant to show unobvious difference between the claimed product

and the prior art product. *In re Marosi*, 218 USPQ 289 (Fed. Cir. 1983). The applied prior art strongly suggested the claimed subject matter. It is noted that if the applicant intends to rely on Examples in the specification or in a submitted declaration to show non-obviousness, the applicant should clearly state how the Examples of the present invention are commensurate in scope with the claims and how the Comparative Examples are commensurate in scope with the applied prior art.

Regarding claim 48, Roe et al. discloses the silicone surfactants have been found to be effective at concentrations as low as 0.1% by weight of the lotion composition. (See Col 23, lines 10-13) While Roe et al. is not explicit to the weight ratio of the film to the hydrophilic surfactant, examiner has reason to believe that the amount noted for the lotion compositions of Roe et al. would also be suitable for producing the topsheet film. It would have been well within the ordinary skill of one in the art at the time of the invention to optimize the amount of surfactant needed for the topsheet motivated by the desire to tailor the hydrophilic property of the surface for end use.

Regarding claims 38 and 39, Roe et al. discloses that mineral oil (also known as liquid petrolatum) is relatively fluid and mobile at ambient temperatures and tends not to remain localized on the surface of the topsheet, but instead migrates through the topsheet into the interior of the diaper. (See Col 1, lines 45-57) Roe et al. also discloses that the mineral oil is useful as an emollient for the lotion composition. (See Col 15, lines 47-61) As such, examiner has reason to believe that the mineral oil as disclosed by Roe et al. would

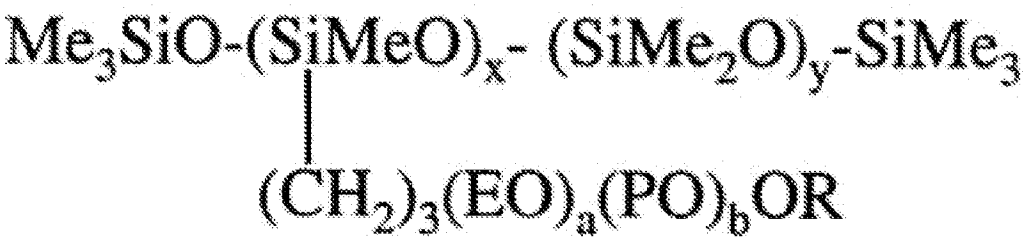
act as a mineral permeabilizing agent since it readily migrates through the topsheet into the interior of the diaper. (See Col 1, lines 45-57) As the mineral oil is used as an emollient in the lotion composition which is to coat at least a portion of the topsheet, examiner notes that the limitation of a layer of mineral material covering at least part of the film is obvious in view of the applied prior art teachings.

Regarding claim 49, Roe et al. discloses the quantity of lotion coating on at least a portion of the diaper topsheets preferably ranges from about 0.1 mg/in^2 to about 25 mg/in^2. Roe et al. further discloses the diaper topsheets contain an effective amount of the lotion composition. Of course, the effective amount of a lotion coating will depend, to a large extent, on the particular lotion composition used. (See Col 10, lines 25-33) Roe et al. discloses the lotion composition can also be applied nonuniformly to the outer surface of the diaper topsheet and may include some portions of the surface that do not have any lotion composition on it. As such, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to optimize the coating/support ratio since the suggestion to do so is clearly taught by Roe et al. with the benefit of being able to use less of the lotion coating to achieve the desired properties in the final diaper.

7. Claims 42 and 43 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Roe et al. (US 5,607,760) as applied to claim 28 above, in view of Randal Hill *Silicone Surfactants* textbook.

Regarding claims 42 and 43, Roe et al. discloses the hydrophilic agent is a hydrophilic polyether silicone polymer as set forth above, however the reference does not explicitly disclose the formula as claimed by applicant.

Randal Hill discloses the surfactant structure can be tailored toward a specific formulation of application. The ratio of polyether molecular weight to siloxane molecular weight allows for the proper balance of surfactant solubility and surface activity in a given formulation or application. This balance can be fine-tuned to an even greater degree of precision by altering the ratio of ethylene oxide (EO) and propylene oxide (PO) in the polyether. Branching can be introduced in either the siloxane or the polyether to change the properties of the final surfactant. Finally, different end groups can be placed on the siloxane and/or the polyether to alter the performance of the surfactant. (See pg. 141, Chapter III, Section A.) In Fig. 3, Hill discloses a graft copolymer (also known rake-type) structure as follows (See pg. 5 and 142):



Finally, Hill also discloses that siloxane surfactants containing mixed EO/PO groups generally gave higher surface tensions than those with only EO groups. (See pg. 14)

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art motivated by expected success to modify the structure of the silicone polyether as disclosed by Roe et al. using the teaching of Hill in order to tailor the surface tension properties and performance of the final surfactant. (See Hill pg. 141, Chapter III, Section A.)

8. Claims 51-53 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Roe et al. (US 5,607,760) as applied to claim 28 above, in view of Tanaka et al. (US 4,695,484)

Regarding claim 51, Roe et al. discloses all of the claim limitations as set forth above, but the reference is not explicitly as to a process for forming a coating as claimed by applicant.

Tanaka et al. discloses a moisture-permeable waterproof coating is formed by coating a fabric with a water-based coating composition containing a film forming polymer and a water-soluble polymer drying or heating the fabric to for a film thereon, and further treating the resulting film with an enzyme to render the film on the fabric microporous. (See Abstract) Tanaka et al. discloses Some of the micropores have a three-dimensional configuration which may contribute to a flexible feeling of the coated fabric. (see Col 2, lines 12-14) Tanaka et al. disclose as a basic film-forming composition, any conventional water-based elastomeric composition may be used. Examples thereof include acrylic emulsions, polyurethane emulsions, polyvinyl acetate emulsions, silicone

emulsions, and mixtures of these compositions. (See Col 2, lines 15-21) Tanaka et al. discloses any fabric made of various synthetic or natural fibers. (See Col 2, lines 45-47) The fabric made by the method of this invention may find its uses in various fields such as sport wears, rain coats, tents, bags, shoes diaper covers and other product lines where moisture-permeability is required in addition to waterproofness. (See Col 3, lines 19-23)

As Roe et al. and Tanaka et al. are both directed to permeable coatings on fabric for use in diaper structures, the art is analogous. Roe et al. discloses the topsheet can be rendered hydrophilic by treating it with a surfactant. (See Col 7, lines 53-63) While Tanaka et al. is teaches product lines where moisture-permeability is required in addition to waterproofness, it would have been well within the ordinary skill of one in the art to treat the film with a surfactant as disclosed by Roe et al. in order to tailor the coated fabric of Tanaka et al. for additional end product use and arrive at the claimed invention. Additionally, one of ordinary skill in the art would have been easily motivated to use the film forming process as taught by Tanaka et al. for the film as disclosed by Roe et al. since the reference is silent as to a specific film forming method. One of ordinary skill in the art would have been easily motivated by expected success since Tanaka et al. teaches the process yields favorable results and provides a film which is moisture-permeable and provides a flexible feeling to the coated fabric. Examiner notes that this would be advantageous to the diaper of Roe.

Regarding claims 52 and 53, Tanaka et al. disclose as a basic film-forming composition, any conventional water-based elastomeric composition may be used. Examples thereof include acrylic emulsions, polyurethane emulsions, polyvinyl acetate emulsions, silicone emulsions, and mixtures of these compositions. (See Col 2, lines 15-21) Therefore, examiner has reason to believe that the film-forming agent is a film forming polymer dissolved in a solvent.

9. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

Double Patenting

10. The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. A nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting rejection is appropriate where the conflicting claims are not identical, but at least one examined application claim is not patentably distinct from the reference claim(s) because the examined application claim is either anticipated by, or would have been obvious over, the reference claim(s). See, e.g., *In re Berg*, 140 F.3d 1428, 46 USPQ2d 1226 (Fed. Cir. 1998); *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re*

Van Ornum, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) or 1.321(d) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent either is shown to be commonly owned with this application, or claims an invention made as a result of activities undertaken within the scope of a joint research agreement.
Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

11. Claims 42, 43, 45, 46, 47 are provisionally rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-5, 8, 10, 13, 17 of copending Application No. 10/574413. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because they are each directed to a support comprising a hydrophilic film coating of a polyether silicone polymer.

Examiner notes that claim 1 of copending Application No. 10/574413 recites the same polyether silicone structure as claimed in the instant application for claim 28. Further, Claim 10 of the copending application recites a hydrophobic support. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to use a hydrophobic *fibrous* support since claim 10 is not explicit as to the form (i.e. fiber or film) of the materials recited for the hydrophobic support of the copending application. As such, claim 28 of the instant application would have been obvious.

Further claims 2-5, 8, 10, 13, 16, 17 of the copending application and claims 43, 45, 46, 47 of the instant application both recite substantially the same monomers useful for polymerization.

This is a provisional obviousness-type double patenting rejection because the conflicting claims have not in fact been patented.

Conclusion

12. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to ALTREV C. SYKES whose telephone number is (571)270-3162. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday, 8AM-5PM EST, alt Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Larry Tarazano can be reached on 571-272-1515. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/D. Lawrence Tarazano/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 1794

/ACS/
Examiner
6/16/09